USGS
science for a changing world

Western Ecological Research Center http://www.werc.usgs.gov

Las Vegas Field Station

Symbolized by the curious Joshua tree and vast expanses of arid shrublands, the Mojave Desert supports a diversity of ephemeral spring plants and rare riparian corridors. Las Vegas is the fastest growing city in the nation, and rapid urbanization increases demands on local resources of the region.

The Las Vegas Field Station is centrally located within the Mojave Desert. Its scientists work in the ecotone between the Mojave, Great Basin, and Sonoran deserts. Research focuses on the plants and animals that occur at the margins of their geographic and physiological limits and are challenged by rapid urban growth.

Field station scientists work with federal agencies and local municipalities in Las Vegas, Nev., St. George, Utah, and Barstow, Calif., to provide biological information to managers for decision-making processes. They conduct research in desert ecosystems on federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and Department of Energy. They provide technical assistance to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, as well as state and local jurisdictions such as the Nevada Division of Wildlife, and the Clark County (Nev.) and Washington County (Utah) Desert Conservation Plans pertaining to threatened species.

Current projects include the translocation, reproduction, density estimation and monitoring of the desert tortoise; effects of livestock grazing, fire and invasive plants on Sonoran and Mojave desert ecosystems; and effects of increased atmospheric carbon dioxide on Mojave Desert vegetation.

P. Medica

Science Expertise

Harold W. Avery, Ph.D., Wildlife Biologist
- Ecological impacts of grazing
- Physiological and nutritional ecology of reptiles

Lesley A. DeFalco, Ph.D. candidate, University of Nevada, Reno, Student Trainee (Ecology)
- Physiological plant ecology
- Plant interactions between native and non-native Mojave Desert plants
- Effect of elevated atmospheric carbon dioxide on plant physiology and plant interactions

Todd C. Esque, Ph.D. candidate, University of Nevada, Reno, Research Ecologist
- Desert ecology
- Effects of wildfire, plant invasions, and granivory on desert plant communities
- Ecology of reptiles and amphibians

For more information, contact:
USGS, Las Vegas Field Station
6770 S. Paradise Rd.
Las Vegas, NV 89119
Phone: 702.914.2206 Fax: 702.914.2045